

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9547

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCON KARACHI

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: EVERYBODY BLOWS THEIR COOL

1. RETIRED AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN , PRESIDENT OF
TEHREEK- E- ISTIQLAL, BLEW HIS COOL AT LAHORE PRESS CONFERENCE
APRIL 27, AND NUMBER OF PPP POLITICIANS FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE
OVER WEEKEND, WHICH NOT ALTOGETHER SURPRISING IN VIEW FACT
THAT TEMPERATURE DURING THIS PERIOD OVER 108. ACCORDING
PRESS, AIR MARSHALL INTENDED TO SPEAK AT PUBLIC MEETING AT
KAMOKE, ON GRANT TRUNK ROAD BETWEEN LAHORE GUJRANWALA EARLY
APRIL 27. JEEP EQUIPPED WITH LOUDSPEAKER USED TO
ADVERTISE HIS PRESENCE ALLEGEDLY USED ABUSIVE LANGUAGE AGAINST
PRESIDENT BHUTTO, ITS OCCUPANTS ASSAULTED BY ANGRY PEOPLE,
AND IT LATER BURNED NEAR LAHORE. NO MAJOR INJURIES SUSTAINED.

2. IN AFTERNOON ASGHAR KHAN TOLD HASTILY CALLED PRESS
CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD LEARNED HAND GRENADE WAS TO HAVE BEEN
THROWN AT HIM AT KAMOKE MEETING AND IN FACT PPP HAD FIRED
ON HIS WORKERS THERE. PPP HAD LATER KIDNAPPED SEVEN
TEHREEK WORKERS FROM JEEP AND BURNED IT. ACCORDING TO
PAKISTAN TIMES HE CALLED BHUTTO " INSANE, SICK, A FASCIST
DICTATOR" AND NUMBER OF EQUALLY UNCOMPLIMENTARY NAMES.
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ASGHAR SAID POLITICAL ISSUES MIGHT BE SETTLED BY THE BULLET IF GOVT DID NOT ALLOW EXERCISE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND DEMANDED BHUTTO TURN OVER POWER TO CHIEF JUSTICE SO FAIR ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD. IF PPP RESORTED TO POWER OF BULLETS IT SHOULD NOT FORGET TINY BULLET COULD ALSO PIERCE " STUPID HEAD" OF PRESIDENT.

3. NEXT DAY, PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER MERAJ KHALID ISSUED LENGTHY STATEMENT DEPLORING AIR MARSHALL' S ABUSIVE LANGUAGE, DEFENDING BHUTTO' S RECORD IN OFFICE, AND EXPRESSING GOVT DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. GOP LAW MINISTER PIRZADA TOLD NEWSMEN AT LAHORE AIRPORT THAT LANGUAGE USED BY ASGHAR INDICATED HE HAD SICK AND DEGENERATED MIND AND THAT PPP WOULD FIGHT TO LAST DROP OF BLOOD TO MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY AND SEE THAT MAN LIKE AIR MARSHALL WOULD BE ELIMINATED BY PEOPLE BEFORE BEING ALLOWED TO GRAB POWER THROUGH BACK DOOR. LARGE NUMBER OF OTHER PPP LEADERS VOICED SIMILAR SENTIMENTS.

4. PUNJAB WORKS MINISTER AND PPP STRONG- ARM MAN IFTIKHAR TARI CALLED ON PPP WORKERS TO MOUNT PEACEFUL PROCESSION APRIL 29 TO PROTEST TEHREEK PRESIDENT' S ATTACK ON BHUTTO. IN SPITE OF HEAT, BOTH POLITICAL AND ATMOSPHERIC, PPP TURNED OUT IN VERY LARGE NUMBERS IN PROCESSION WHICH MARCHED TO MARTIAL MUSIC PLAYED BY ACCOMPANYING LOUDSPEAKERS AND MANY SHOTS FIRED IN AIR BY ARMED PARTY WORKERS. SOME 50 BUSES BROUGHT FAITHFUL FROM RURAL AREAS. TARI CALLED AIR MARSHALL TRAITOR WHO TALKS OF GUNS AND BATTLES AT BEHEST OF PAK FOES AND THREATENED " TO PULL HIS FILTHY TONGUE OUT AND THROW IT IN GARBAGE BIN TO ROT" IF HE CONTINUED TO ABUSE BHUTTO. SEVERAL OTHER SPEAKERS FOLLOWED SUIT.

5. COMMENT: POLITICAL RHETORIC SUNK TO NEW LOW IN PUNJAB THIS WEEKEND, AND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW IT CAN GET MUCH FOULER CONSIDERING LIMITS OF BOTH URDU AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES. MOST PPP LEADERS, INCLUDING TARI, PROCLAIMED THEIR DEVOTION TO LAW AND ORDER AND SEVERAL USED IT AS EXPLANATION WHY GOVERNMENT HAD NOT ARRESTED ASGHAR KHAN, BUT THERE STILL DANGER THAT SOME AROUSED PPP WORKER MIGHT MAKE EFFORT AGAINST AIR MARSHALL' S LIFE.

DECONTROL DEC 31, 1976

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